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# **The Ethics of Inclusion: Gender Equality, Equal Opportunity and Sexual Assault in the Australian, British, Canadian and US Armed Forces**

## **Pre-Proof Manuscript**

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## **Andrea Ellner**

Women have played diverse roles in military campaigns for centuries, but it was only during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that their work with or in the Australian, British, Canadian and US armed forces became increasingly formalised, important and permanent. Today official declarations abound avowing the indispensability of gender inclusiveness and diversity for military effectiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century operating environment. Today's "militaries rely more and more on women and members of visible minority and Aboriginal groups to fill their ranks, rendering the recruitment, retention, and optimum employment of these members important to the success of the organization – from the perspectives of both operations and public accountability".<sup>1</sup>

In some units and services women and members of non-white ethnic, non-Judeo-Christian religious or non-heterosexual minorities have been integrated effectively.<sup>2</sup> However, equal opportunity and diversity policies have not been uniformly successful; for individuals who identify with several minority groups the situation can be especially precarious. High rates of sexual harassment, assault and rape in the military make these shortcomings glaringly obvious. That such offences happen at

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<sup>1</sup> Nicola J. Holden and Karen D. Davis, "Harassment in the Military: Cross National Comparisons", in Franklin C. Pinch et al., *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues* (Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, <sup>reprint</sup> 2006), pp. 97f.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the situation in Canada and the US see Donna Winslow and Jason Dunn, "Women in the Canadian Forces: Between Legal and Social Integration", *Current Sociology* vol. 50, no. 5 (2002), pp. 641-67.

all, let alone in such high numbers, is even more astonishing since they profoundly violate military ethics and practically all professional values by which service members at all ranks are expected to live in all four countries.

Other scholars have explained discrimination and sexual assault in the armed forces through the lens of military culture,<sup>3</sup> but there is surprisingly little scholarly work that explicitly and systematically explores the problem through the lens of military ethics. This chapter seeks to begin to make amends. It focuses on women because the challenges for different minorities are often so specific that they need to be examined in their own right. Likewise, despite similarities, the contexts for sexual assaults against men and women in the military differ to such a degree that a discussion of both within the limits of this chapter could not do justice to either.

Finally, the chapter was originally intended to be a comparative analysis. However, there is insufficient secondary literature, which establishes a suitable basis for the meta-analysis that would have made this feasible within the limited space.<sup>4</sup> As a rare comparative study on sexual harassment in the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and US armed forces found, it is difficult to establish a common baseline just for comparing the parameters the countries used to measure statistically the degree of discrimination and sexual harassment.<sup>5</sup> This does not even begin to address policy, legal and procedural contexts that are interrelated with the ethical frameworks within which the services operate. It will thus be necessary to conduct in future a

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<sup>3</sup> For example for the US see Carol Burke, *Camp All-American, Hanoi Jane, and the High-And-Tight – Gender, Folklore, and Changing Military Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004) or Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Judith Reppy (eds.), *Beyond Zero Tolerance – Discrimination in Military Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> An exception is Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? – The Militarisation of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto Press, 1983), which cites British and US examples.

<sup>5</sup> Holden, Davis, "Harassment in the Military", pp. 99ff.

systematic comparison of the four militaries on a rather grander scale than this modest chapter can provide.

The chapter assumes that there are communalities between the four national armed forces in the areas of core concern. This is deemed a legitimate assumption for two reasons. One, the comparative study cited above found “considerable similarity in the types of behaviour determined to constitute harassment” which included “sexual and personal harassment, abuse of authority, and hazing”.<sup>6</sup> Two, as Colonel M. D. Capstick observed, whilst service cultures differ, for example technological mastery is central to air force identities whereas armies revolve around the warrior ethos, “individual services often share some of their most fundamental cultural traits more strongly with their allied counterparts than they do with the other services of their own nation”.<sup>7</sup>

The analysis seeks to generate new insights by viewing the phenomena of uneven integration of, and sexual offences against, women on the one hand and military culture and values on the other hand as closely linked. It argues that professional values are in practice mediated through military service cultures. This can give rise to a differential application of behavioural norms amongst superiors and peers. Particularly important here are two closely linked fundamental influences. One is the idea that the military is “a self-proclaimed citadel of modern chivalry”.<sup>8</sup> The other is the centrality of the warrior ideal to military identities and unofficial hierarchies of esteem and status. Traditionally associated with identity building amongst ground

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<sup>6</sup> Holden, Davis, “Harassment in the Military”, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup> Col. M.D. Capstick, “Defining the Culture: The Canadian Army in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, *Canadian Military Journal* (Spring 2003), p. 49 at [www.journal.forces.ca/vo4/no1/doc/v4n1-p47-53-eng.pdf](http://www.journal.forces.ca/vo4/no1/doc/v4n1-p47-53-eng.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> James H. Toner, *Morals under the Gun: The Cardinal Virtues, Military Ethics and American Society* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 200), p. 1.

combat soldiers, “the warrior framework has gained emphasis and legitimacy as a schema for describing the entire military”.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis aims to show that these influences shape not only practical applications of the military ethos, which can lead to the exclusion of women and put them at risk of sexual harassment and even assault. They also determine normative aspects of historical and current discourses on attracting or rejecting women’s military service.

There is evidence from Australia and the US that the selective application of military ethics and discrimination against women continues beyond deployment and active service, but there is insufficient scope in this chapter to address these dimensions.<sup>10</sup>

### **A Paradigm Shift for Gender Integration?**

In all four countries senior political and military leaders are on record declaring that women are essential in today’s armed forces. But, especially in Australia and the US, the effectiveness of gender integration policies in the armed forces has come under increasing public scrutiny in light of serious revelations about sexual offences in their ranks. In this sense gender integration and sexual assault have become intrinsically linked. Following the 2011 Broderick Review into incidents of sexual harassment and assault of women and more generally their treatment at the Australian Defence Academy (ADFA), the Australian senior military leadership committed itself in writing to improving the integration of women in the ADF. It also declared *inter alia* that

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<sup>9</sup> Franklin C. Pinch et al., *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues* (Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, <sup>reprint</sup> 2006) p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Asha Anchan et al. “Women veterans face stereotypes on and off the battlefield”, *The Center for Public Integrity*, 4 September 2013 at <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/09/04/13303/women-veterans-face-stereotypes-and-battlefield>; Tim Barlass, “Battle not Over for Women Returning Home”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 2013 at <http://www.smh.com.au/national/battle-not-over-for-women-returning-home-20130525-2n3pm.html>; Samantha Crompvoets, *The health and wellbeing of female Vietnam and Contemporary Veterans*, 2012 p. iv at [http://www.dva.gov.au/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/research/Documents/viet\\_fem\\_con\\_report.pdf](http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/research/Documents/viet_fem_con_report.pdf)

“women are essential to the sustainability and operational effectiveness of the Australian Defence Force because they contribute to a diverse workforce which strengthens the Australian Defence Force’s ability to be an effective, modern, relevant and high performing organisation.”<sup>11</sup>

The British Army emphasises that “commitment to equality and diversity in the Army is vital to our operational effectiveness”.<sup>12</sup> The Royal Air Force prides itself on having repeatedly been nominated a top employer for women. In 2013 the Canadian military’s plans to reduce what it considered an unrealistic target of recruiting 25 per cent women were criticised as counterproductive, because women and other visible minorities will be “increasingly essential if the military is to remain at its current strength”.<sup>13</sup> In the US President Obama called the role of women in the military indispensable.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the serious ethical implications, for political and military leaders it is thus also a matter of operational capabilities that despite decades of ‘zero tolerance’ policies service members and particularly women are still being bullied and sexually assaulted by peers or superiors at their home bases, on deployment and in service academies.<sup>15</sup> In May 2013 US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel indicated as much

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<sup>11</sup> Address by Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Defence, to the Gender in Defence and Security Leadership Conference 13 March 2013, National Convention Centre, Canberra  
[http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2013/03/13/minister-for-defence-speech-gender-in-defence-and-security-leadership-conference/](http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2013/03/13/minister-for-defence-speech-gender-in-defence-and-security-leadership-conference/;);

<sup>12</sup> Army, *The British Army – An Introduction* (London: Crown Copyright, 2010)  
[www.army.mod.uk/documents/.../2010\\_ARMY\\_Brochure\\_9.0\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/.../2010_ARMY_Brochure_9.0_(2).pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Lee Berthiaume, “Canadian Forces to reduce ‘unattainable’ targets for recruitment of women, visible minorities”, *National Post*, 18 August 2013 at <http://news.nationalpost.com/2013/08/18/canadian-forces-to-reduce-unattainable-targets-for-recruitment-of-women-visible-minorities/>

<sup>14</sup> Obama quoted in Claudette Roulo, “Defense Department Expands Women’s Combat Role”, *DoD News*, 24 January 2013 <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id>

<sup>15</sup> See for example on Australia Gary Rumble et al, *DLA Piper Review of Allegations of Sexual and Other Abuse in Defence, Volume 1*. Commonwealth Government of Australia, 2011  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/pathwaytochange/Docs/DLAPiper/DefenceDLAPiperReview-FullReport.pdf>;  
Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Armed Forces. Phase 2*. 2012 at <http://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/adf-complete.pdf>. The US has a much more regular, annual reporting system now. For the latest report see The US Department of Defense,

when he declared that "this department may be nearing a stage where the frequency of this crime, and the perception that there is tolerance of it, could very well undermine our ability to effectively carry out the mission and to recruit and retain the good people we need".<sup>16</sup>

In Britain and Canada the problem and the need to prevent sexual assault in the military has attracted relatively little public attention. The last systematic survey of sexual harassment in the British military was conducted in 2009.<sup>17</sup> Most recently the case of Corporal Anne-Marie Ellement, Royal Military Police, who committed suicide after her allegations that she had been raped and subsequently bullied were not adequately investigated, raised some questions about sexual assault in the British armed forces and gave rise to official commitments to improve procedures for complaints and care of vulnerable personnel.<sup>18</sup> In Canada an article in *Maclean's Magazine* in late April 2014 alleged that sexual assault was endemic in the armed forces. Considering Canada's history of gender integration, this is surprising. It is, however, somewhat difficult for the Defence Ministry to refute the allegations, because the military is "three years behind in reporting military data and criminal statistics -- including alleged sexual assaults reports."<sup>19</sup>

Until recently the prevalent response of the senior civilian and military leadership to such challenges in all four countries has been to reiterate, as Chief of the US Joint

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*Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, Fiscal Year 2013* (Washington, DC: DoD, April 2014) [http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY13\\_DoD\\_SAPRO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_on\\_Sexual\\_Assault.pdf](http://sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY13_DoD_SAPRO_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> David Martin, "New figures show sexual assault in the U.S. military is on the rise", *CBS Evening News*, 7 May 2013 <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-figures-show-sexual-assault-in-the-us-military-is-on-the-rise/>

<sup>17</sup> Antonia Dietmann et al. *Sexual Harassment: Servicewomen & Servicemen's Views 2009*, Technical Report, 11 August 2009. See also Rachel Woodward and Trish Winter, *Sexing the Soldier – The Politics of Gender and the Contemporary British Army* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 56-59.

<sup>18</sup> BBC, "Cpl Anne-Marie Ellement hanging: MoD pledges training changes", *BBC News Dorset*, 20 May 2014 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-27477282>

<sup>19</sup> CTVNews.ca Staff, "Lawson vows action on sexual assaults, but military behind on reporting criminal stats", *CTV News*, 27 May 2014 <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/lawson-vows-action-on-sexual-assaults-but-military-behind-on-reporting-criminal-stats-1.1840321>.

Chiefs of Staff (JCS) General Dempsey and Defense Secretary Panetta did in 2012, that sexual assault had “no place in the military”, violated “everything the US military stands for” and deterred potential recruits.<sup>20</sup> To add a Canadian example, challenged by a parliamentary committee about the April 2014 allegations Chief of the Canadian Defence Staff General Tom Lawson stated:

“I do not accept from any quarter, the notion that sexual misconduct is simply part of our military culture. (...) Sexual misconduct of any kind is wrong, is despicable, it's corrosive and it runs utterly contrary to everything the Canadian Armed Forces stands for.”<sup>21</sup>

Repeated whenever in the wake of disturbing reports and statistics the media and legislators challenged governments and militaries to comment publicly on reports of systematic bullying or sexual assault, these seem to be statements of the obvious. They came to sound like assurances to political decision-makers and the military itself that there was no systemic problem and if there were it would all be in hand; there was no need for a fundamental debate.

It appears to be no coincidence that the most significant change in the senior military leadership's public position on the issue has occurred in Australia and the US where the public debate and pressure from the legislature has been persistent and fears arose that the repeated scandals might affect recruitment. In Australia the Four Corners documentary *Chamber of Horrors* on sexual abuse at ADFA broadcast in June 2014<sup>22</sup> and in the US the release in 2012 of the Oscar nominated feature length

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Defense, Secretary Panetta, Remarks on Capitol Hill, 7 April 2012  
<http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=5013>

<sup>21</sup> CTVNews.ca Staff, “Lawson vows action on sexual assaults, but military behind on reporting criminal stats”, CTV News, 27 May 2014 at <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/lawson-vows-action-on-sexual-assaults-but-military-behind-on-reporting-criminal-stats-1.1840321>

<sup>22</sup> Michael Brissenden and Clay Hitchens, *Chamber of Horrors*, 9 June 2014  
<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2014/06/09/4019501.htm>



documentary film *The Invisible War* on rape in the US military clearly gave the problem a particularly high profile.<sup>23</sup>

Australian Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison's 2013 address on unacceptable behaviour in the Army and the need for a profound culture change was path breaking; on YouTube it had received over 1.5 million views by August 2014.<sup>24</sup>

He made it clear that there was "no place for this type of behaviour in the" Australian Defence Force (ADF) and, more importantly, that after two decades of inquiries into the ADF's culture and justice system its leadership had ceased to accept "the 'bad apple' argument" and regarded such behaviour as "symptoms of a systemic problem" which the ADF would address "in a comprehensive manner".<sup>25</sup>

Australia had opened close ground combat positions to women in January 2013. In June 2014 General Morrison explicitly linked opening all roles in the armed forces to women with the profound culture change he projected a year earlier, and which he advised other militaries to undergo, on the one hand and sexual assault prevention on the other hand. He added that

"Armies that revel in their separateness from civil society, that value the male over the female, that use their imposed values to exclude those who don't fit the particular traits of the dominant group, who celebrate the violence that is

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<sup>23</sup> *The Invisible War*, Directed by Kirby Dick, DVD. See also <http://invisiblewarmovie.com>

<sup>24</sup> Australian Army, "Message from the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO, to the Australian Army following the announcement on Thursday, 13 June 2013 of civilian police and Defence investigations into allegations of unacceptable behaviour by Army members", 13 June 2013 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QagpoeVgr8U>

<sup>25</sup> Australian Army, Chief of Army Press Conference, *Address by the Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO*, 13 June 2013. <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/Chief-of-Army-Press-Conference>

integral to my profession rather than seeking ways to contain it - they do nothing to distinguish the soldier from the brute."<sup>26</sup>

In February 2013 General Dempsey used a similar rationale, when he announced that women would no longer be barred from ground close combat roles. He

“believed that the problem of assaults against women in the military [was] due partly to the combat ban: “When you have one part of the population that is designated as warriors, and another part that is designated as something else, I think that disparity begins to establish a psychology that in some cases led to that environment”.<sup>27</sup>

Josh Carr, a former US Army Specialist, implicitly agreed when he commented that dropping the combat ban was “a huge step towards objectivity in the military” but predicted it would “take many years to overcome the traditional gender stereotypes prevalent today”.<sup>28</sup>

The new reasoning of the senior political and military leadership in Australia and US connects to insights several decades of critical scholarship on military culture have generated, in particular the centrality and longevity of the cult of hypermasculinity, warrior ideals and associated gender stereotypes.<sup>29</sup> They indicate a deeper level of, but also open up new ways of even better, understanding the dynamics which have prevented fuller integration of women. They invite questions about normative underpinnings of the warrior ideal and its interrelationship with the culture and ethics of the organisation.

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<sup>26</sup> Julian Drape, “Army chief wants more women in more forces”, *The Australian*, 14 June 2014 <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/army-chief-wants-more-women-in-more-forces/story-fn3dxix6-1226954046713?nk=70712127c9d828b5caa900a5f5ad05bc>

<sup>27</sup> “Women in Combat: Lifting the Ban for Better or Worse?”, *News Record*, 3 February 2013 <http://www.newsrecord.co/women-in-combat-lifting-the-ban-for-better-or-worse/>

<sup>28</sup> “Women in Combat”

<sup>29</sup> For a good summary of key texts and arguments see Jennifer G. Mathers, “Women and State Military Forces”, in Carol Cohn (ed.), *Women & Wars* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), pp. 124-45.

## Women and the Warrior Ideal

Traditionally the essence of the warrior ideal lies in heterosexual hyper-masculinity and the exalted physicality, courage and valour associated with ground close combat roles.<sup>30</sup> If the warrior is the benchmark against which other identities are measured, integrating even different male identities is a challenge. Today elevating the warrior to the standard measure of the ideal soldier, sailor or member of the airforce “runs counter to trends in the spectrum of mission requirements that now fall to operational combat personnel”.<sup>31</sup> Morrison and Dempsey have acknowledged the need to adapt military culture to meet these new operational requirements, but this will not be an easy task. In the wake of the sustained high intensity counter-insurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan military culture is still deeply infused with the warrior ideal.

The still venerated, if contested, status of the warrior was illustrated in the US debate about the ill-fated Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM) designed “to honour actions (...) with an ‘extraordinary’ impact on combat operations, not involving personal valour or even proximity to a theatre of war”.<sup>32</sup> With reference to drone pilots a retired Green Beret supposed that “now they will award Purple Hearts for carpal tunnel syndrome”.<sup>33</sup> The debate illustrated the still prevailing link between valour, honour and physical courage, even if it is projected to become less relevant.<sup>34</sup> It was also indicative of a hierarchy of prestige and honourableness built into the finer structure of the military, because for many contributors it was unthinkable that the new medal

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<sup>30</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 264.

<sup>31</sup> Pinch et al., *Challenge and Change in the Military*, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> Lexington, “Medals for drone pilots? - The fraught debate over how to honour cyber-warriors”, *The Economist*, 29 March 2014 <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21599785-fraught-debate-over-how-honour-cyber-warriors-medals-drone-pilots>

<sup>33</sup> “Dilbert at War”, *The Economist*, 21 June 2014 <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21604608-stressful-lives-chair-force-dilbert-war> [subscription only]

<sup>34</sup> Jamie Holmes, “Why Drone Pilots Deserve Medals”, *Slate*, 2 August 2012 [http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future\\_tense/2012/08/drone\\_pilots\\_deserve\\_military\\_medals.htm](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2012/08/drone_pilots_deserve_military_medals.htm)

might mean more than those awarded to service members who distinguished themselves, were injured or killed in combat in theatre.

Underlying this hierarchy is an ethical framework that is rooted in an idea of chivalry which is especially pernicious for women because it associates valour and honour with physical hardship and heroism especially in ground close combat. In this construct it counts for little that today women serve in many combat positions or combat zones. As long as the dominant warrior ideal is not replaced as the embodiment of military valour and women are excluded from, or have yet to arrive in, ground close combat positions they are - as a group - excluded from occupations which are most likely to enable them to prove that they are worthy of being treated honourably.

The point is thus not that combat exclusions have been curtailing women's career opportunities, although they have.<sup>35</sup> It is that women have been collectively declared ineligible for warrior status and individually denied opportunities to distinguish themselves as ideal warriors. In the prevailing culture they have thus not been able to command the reverence reserved for male warriors, because they are classified, as Dempsey put it, as "something else". That this affects not only to their status, but also the treatment they can expect by their peers and superiors is connected to the dualistic nature of the concept of chivalry.

### **The Chivalry Trap**

Of interest here is the role of the chivalric code of conduct in the attempt to regulate social relations in and of the warrior class.<sup>36</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Dew described two

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<sup>35</sup> For example Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 138.

<sup>36</sup> Others have explored gender and chivalry, but with different analytical aims and not through the lens of military ethics. For a recent example see Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict – Towards a Feminist Theory of War* (New York: Columbia University press, 2013).

theories for the emergence of chivalry, both not only associated with warrior status but also with implications for gender relations. One suggested that coming of age rituals, during which boys of Germanic tribes were endowed with warrior status, had developed into courtly rituals with courtly society the reference point for chivalrous behaviour. The other saw the order of chivalry created as a formal institution to address disorder and lawlessness in Europe where “the weak everywhere fell a prey to the strong”.<sup>37</sup> The

“order of chivalry was established to remedy these disorders (...) to succor [sic!] the oppressed and humble the proud, was the motto of the order; hence women, being the most defenceless portion of society, became the peculiar objects of protection, and as faithlessness was cause of much disorder, knights were to be peculiarly observant of plighted faith”.<sup>38</sup>

For Dew the pinnacle of chivalrous attributes was “love of arms, romantic spirit of adventure, courtesy of manners, the point of honor, and devoted and respectful attention to the female sex.”<sup>39</sup> For Sanderson, a contemporary of Dew, a strong sense of justice as well as “valor, loyalty, courtesy, munificence, formed collectively the character of an accomplished knight”.<sup>40</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> century historian Barbara Tuchman called prowess “the prime essential” of chivalry and loyalty “chivalry’s fulcrum”.<sup>41</sup>

Future knights were expected to be socialised into these virtues from the first stage of their courtly education, when they were “taught to reverence knighthood - first impression made on [the page’s] mind amid the ladies of the court was that of love, gallantry, honor, bravery, and religion”; he was expected to select a lady as a moral

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas R. Dew, *A Digest of the Laws, Customs, Manners, and Institutions of the Ancient and Modern Nations* (New York: Appleton, 1853), p. 341. See also Edgar Sanderson et al., *The World’s History and its Makers – Vol. I* (New York: Du Mont, 1902), pp. 400f.

<sup>38</sup> Dew, *A Digest*, p. 341. [emphasis original]

<sup>39</sup> Dew, *A Digest*, pp. 342f.

<sup>40</sup> Sanderson et al., *The World’s History*, p. 403, and 402.

<sup>41</sup> Barbara Tuchmann, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14<sup>th</sup> Century* (Alfred A Knopf, 1993), p. 62 and 64.

guardian.<sup>42</sup> Sanderson, too, emphasised the importance for knights to “honor, above all, the women, and not to permit any one to slander them, because from them after God comes all the honor that men can acquire”; for him gallantry expresses “the close union of bravery in knights with this devotion to the fair sex”.<sup>43</sup>

Much of this reading of chivalry had survived until today; Moelker and Kümmel even asked in 2007 whether it should be *the* virtue governing interpersonal conduct.<sup>44</sup> And most of chivalry’s cardinal virtues can be found in virtually identical terms in the modern service doctrines governing the professional ethics of being a soldier, sailor or member of the air force be this as a team member or a leader. Hence, if today’s warriors are perceived – and perceive themselves – as inheritors of the chivalric order, incidents of sexual harassment and rape are inexplicable as they are profound violations of official doctrinal and unofficial chivalric norms.

However, this conclusion would be based on presumptions which are not necessarily valid. Firstly, how far chivalric norms, like any attempt to civilise warfare, were in fact adhered to is debatable. Wingfield saw them as part of the evolution of just war theory, both with regard to *jus ad bellum* as well as *in bello*.<sup>45</sup> Huizinga saw them as the development of rules of a game which allowed the aristocracy to minimise the costs of war.<sup>46</sup> For Tuchman they were at best an ideal and at worst fiction, “a veneer over violence, greed and sensuality” that was mostly out of man’s reach.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Dew, *A Digest*, p. 343.

<sup>43</sup> Sanderson et al., *The World’s History*, p. 401.

<sup>44</sup> René Moelker and Gerhard Kümmel, “Chivalry and Codes of Conduct: Can the Virtue of Chivalry Epitomize Guidelines for Interpersonal Conduct?”, *Journal of Military Ethics* Vol. 6, no. 4 (2007), pp. 292-302.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas C. Wingfield, “Chivalry in the Use of Force”, *University of Toledo Law Review* vol. 31, no. 111 (2000-01), pp. 111-36.

<sup>46</sup> Moelker and Kümmel, “Chivalry and Codes of Conduct”, pp. 293f.

<sup>47</sup> Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14<sup>th</sup> Century* (Alfred A Knopf, 1993), p. 69.

Secondly, and more importantly for today's female service members, chivalric norms in war only applied to members of the brotherhood of knights.<sup>48</sup> Women were excluded from this circle and the protection and reverence they were expected to receive from knights came at the price of severely limited agency; this is incidentally the main reason why Moeller and Kuemmel concluded that chivalry was not suited to governing modern interpersonal conduct.

Gender stereotyping, sexual harassment, assault and rape can co-exist with self-perceptions of chivalric or warrior status. This is, as Prestwich argued, they shaped knights' will to fight and the manner in which they fought in the Hundred Years War, but were "tempered by a considerable practicality" and, he added, that war was also "characterized by looting, burning and rape".<sup>49</sup> Tuchman goes even further and interprets historical accounts as reliable evidence that Edward III, who had been so pivotal in promoting the idea of chivalry, did rape the Countess of Salisbury, wife of one of his key subjects.<sup>50</sup>

As a reference for practiced codes of conduct in a modern diverse military chivalric norms are thus at best suboptimal. At worst they provide an unofficial normative framework that facilitates the toleration and in-group justification of offences against women and others, including men of any colour or creed, who do not match the construct of the ideal warrior. The problem is that chivalric norms and associated gender stereotypes have proven remarkably enduring as the debate about women in ground close combat roles illustrates. In it two objections are especially notable. Both insinuate that women cannot be trusted as warriors.

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<sup>48</sup> Sanderson's contention that the 100 Year War was the epitome of chivalrous behaviour was rather an overstatement. Sanderson et al., *The World's History*, p. 402.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards – War and State in England, 1272-1377* (London: Routledge, 1980) pp. 206f.

<sup>50</sup> Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror*, p. 68.

One is that women on the battlefield would distract men from their combat tasks and worse might lead them to take excessive risks, because men would feel obliged to protect their female peer and rescue her if she were wounded<sup>51</sup> and could not cope if she were killed. For example Nate Smith, USMC Officer from 2003 to 2010, argued in 2012 that whilst women served with courage and honour in other branches of the military they did not belong in the infantry. This was inter alia because “Americans do not want their women hunting and killing the enemy, nor are their young men psychologically equipped to accept with stoicism the violent, gruesome deaths of female comrades in arms”.<sup>52</sup>

The latter point communicates that women cannot be trusted, because they entice men to act in a chivalrous manner. It is also wrong, as the Daily Telegraph’s defence editor pointed out in 2010 when he stated that male soldiers regularly risk their lives to save a wounded fellow male soldier.<sup>53</sup> The former point is also wrong. In 2011 an ABC News/Washington Post poll found that “nearly three-quarters of Americans agreed that women should be allowed to serve in ground units that engage in direct combat”,<sup>54</sup> the level of opposition between 20 and 26 per cent remained steady in 2013.<sup>55</sup>

The second common objection is that women would be unable to rescue a heavy male infantry peer out of a danger zone, because they lack the upper body strength. This argument appears to be of a biological, scientific nature, but ignores that the

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<sup>51</sup> Con Coughlin, “If women are good enough to fight on the front line, then let them”, *The Telegraph*, 30 November 2010 at <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/concoughlin/100066107/if-women-are-good-enough-to-fight-on-the-front-line-then-let-them/>

<sup>52</sup> Nate Smith, “Women Do Not Belong in the Infantry”, *The Soldier’s Load*, 24 May 2012 at <http://thesoldiersload.com/2012/05/24/women-do-not-belong-in-the-infantry/>

<sup>53</sup> Coughlin, “If women are good enough to fight on the front line, then let them”.

<sup>54</sup> “Three-Quarters Back Women in Combat Roles”, *ABC News*, 16 March 2011 at <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/03/three-quarters-back-women-in-combat-roles/>

<sup>55</sup> Emily Swanson, “Polls On Women In Combat Find Support For Policy Shift”, *Huffington Post*, 27 January 2013 at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/27/women-in-combat-poll\\_n\\_2561757.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/27/women-in-combat-poll_n_2561757.html)



evidence that women can develop sufficient upper body strength and have proven their abilities on operation.<sup>56</sup> Again it insinuates that women cannot be trusted to do what the warrior ethos demands of them.

The pervasiveness and inherent contradictions of these gender stereotypes is further illustrated by a 2012 survey of the USMC. It found that 17 per cent of male Marines would leave the Corps if women were allowed into combat positions; principal reasons included fear of being falsely accused of sexual harassment or assault, women being treated preferentially, pregnancy or other personal issues undermining unit readiness and for both sexes fraternisation and “feeling obligated to protect female Marines”.<sup>57</sup> This sits uneasily with another survey’s finding that reporting rates of sexual harassment and assault have gone up, which suggests that recent policies have had some success, and that the US Marine Corps and Army registered the largest increases with 86 per cent and 50 per cent respectively, but the number of incidents was stable,<sup>58</sup> which means there has been no progress in prevention.

Why should these practices and perceptions survive after decades of women serving in the four militaries with honour and in increasingly more demanding roles that have brought them closer and closer to combat operations?

### **Moral Conflicts and Minimum Adaptation**

The military has always needed women, in uniform and at the ‘home front’, as Enloe has observed, but has been confused, because “the things military commanders

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<sup>56</sup> Ellen Haring, “What Women bring to the Fight”, *Parameters* 43(2) Summer 2013, pp. 27-32. \*\*exact pages?\*

<sup>57</sup> Julie Watson, “Marines Survey: About 17 Percent Of Male Soldiers Would Leave If Women Move To Combat Roles”, *Huffington Post*, 1 February 2013 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/01/marines-survey-women\\_n\\_2600382.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/01/marines-survey-women_n_2600382.html)

<sup>58</sup> Associated Press, “Reports of sexual assault in the military jumped 50 percent in 2013”, *PBS Newshour - The Rundown*, 27 December 2013 at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/reports-of-sexual-assault-in-the-military-jumped-50-percent-in-2013/>

want from women just aren't compatible".<sup>59</sup> Women serve in a wide range of roles today not because governments and military leaders readily welcomed them, but because they eventually had to drop objections to their inclusion. This dynamic is important. Personnel shortages repeatedly played a salient role in women's recruitment. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century social changes leading to equal rights legislation made it increasingly socially acceptable for women to serve, although feminists have never been universally supportive of women joining the military or serving in all combat roles.<sup>60</sup>

The arguments of opponents of all persuasions have consistently been clustered around anxieties about women's appropriate social roles, a belief that war is a man's pursuit for which women are not, nor can they become, physically, emotionally or morally equipped and fears that they undermine military effectiveness. For other, like former Chief of the General Staff now Lord Dannatt, barring women from ground close combat roles was a "point of principle"; he did not think that "to be in a unit that is given orders to attack a hill, to attack a town, to attack a village, that is a role not for women."<sup>61</sup>

In all four countries women were only reluctantly accepted by the military hierarchy, in limited numbers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as nurses<sup>62</sup> and in World War I (WWI) in Britain in 1917-18.<sup>63</sup> The US Army resisted such ideas, but the Secretary of the Navy

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<sup>59</sup> Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, pp. 212f.

<sup>60</sup> Gwyn Kirk, "Women Oppose U.S. Militarism – Toward a New Definition of Security" in Francine D'Amico and Laurie Weinstein (eds.), *Gender Camouflage – Women and the U.S. Military* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp. 241-246. For a recent example see Kim Tran, "Rethinking Women in Combat", *The FeministWire*, 31 January 2013 <http://thefeministwire.com/2013/01/9820/>

<sup>61</sup> Nicky Moffat quoted in BBC, "Army to review female close combat roles", BBC News, 8 May 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27331365>

<sup>62</sup> Maj Gen. Jeanne Holm, USAF (ret.), *Women in the Military – An Unfinished Revolution* (Novato: Presidio, CA, rev. ed. 1992), pp.7f. Nicola Tyrer, *Sisters in Arms – British Army Nurses Tell Their Story* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008), pp. 1-4.

<sup>63</sup> Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army – War and the Gentle Sex, 1907-1948* (London: Routledge, 2006).

decided that women could be recruited into the Navy and Marine Corps in 1917.<sup>64</sup> Having demobilised all women but nurses in 1918 the wheel had to be reinvented at the start of WWII. Again the services and governments were reluctant, but WWI had set a precedent. Although run separately from the main military, women's services were better organised and a sizeable minority moved into occupations traditionally considered men's work.

Women's military service and public roles in the war were accompanied by considerable moral anxieties in society, government and the military. They were challenging their socially prescribed roles and discovering their public agency. This was confusing to government officials, the military and parts of society, because the differentiation of roles to which women laid claim did not easily match existing or allow for a neat distinction between social scripts for respectable or, conversely, disreputable women. Negotiating social constructs of femininity became a complex business. Reconciling normative expectations of women's roles and behaviour in relation to men with the diverse wartime requirements became difficult, because behaviour that was officially sanctioned or even encouraged in one context was deemed undesirable in another.

Women contributing to the war effort were expected to maintain their respectability and femininity, but joining an auxiliary service, especially the Army's, might bring them into disrepute or permit them to behave disreputably.<sup>65</sup> British Members of Parliament (MP) thought it would assist recruitment, if the service ministers' "paternal instinct" comforted mothers by ensuring that "these girls are protected morally,

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<sup>64</sup> Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall, *Crossed Currents – Navy Women in a Century of Change* (Washington, D.C: Brassey's, 1999), pp. 4ff.

<sup>65</sup> See for example Noakes, *Women in the British Army*.

spiritually and physically”.<sup>66</sup> Another MP expressed sympathy for “the jealous young husband” who “naturally thought of the satyr of a non-commissioned officer who would be waiting to attack the virtue of his wife” serving in the forces<sup>67</sup>

Fears about women spreading sexually transmitted diseases and damaging their (reproductive) health or that of men were juxtaposed with the US military’s officially sanctioned prostitution, which was considered essential for maintaining morale and hence essential for the war effort.<sup>68</sup> Yet, British married women were not to be posted abroad, because it was deemed “essential for the continuance of a sound moral condition in society that the husband and wife should be able, periodically at least, to live together”.<sup>69</sup> The experience of greater freedoms might undermine their ability or even willingness to perform such socially prescribed roles as caring for home, husband and children or upholding social mores.<sup>70</sup>

In the military, just like today, support for gender integration at all levels including the higher echelons of the main services was essential, but not ubiquitous. The need to attract recruits shaped the roles women were permitted to occupy. In the British Army it took General Pile, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Anti-Aircraft Command, to overcome strong male opposition to women working as searchlight and anti-aircraft gun operators, but he failed to have the combat prohibition

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<sup>66</sup> Hansard, House of Commons, *National Service Bill*, HC Deb 09 December 1941 vol 376, col. 1434 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1941/dec/09/national-service-bill>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutues – The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Hansard, House of Lords, *National Service Bill*, December 1941, *HL Deb 12 December 1941 vol 121 cc258-84*, col. 269 at [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1941/dec/12/national-service-bill#S5LV0121P0\\_19411212\\_HOL\\_3](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1941/dec/12/national-service-bill#S5LV0121P0_19411212_HOL_3)

<sup>70</sup> Lucy Noakes, *War and the British – Gender and National Identity, 1939-91* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

revoked.<sup>71</sup> The powerful social taboo against allowing women to take part in combat and kill applied across the board.

The scope of women's military service varied with the country's social norms and women's educational opportunities.<sup>72</sup> However, everywhere the measures were seen as imposed under duress of an external existential threat and made more palatable by the exceptional circumstances. That women were recruited as a stopgap measure demanded only a modicum of adaptation of the organisations and male service members, just sufficient to enable them to do their jobs and avoid alienating female recruits.

The notion, or for some the hope, that women were only a temporary presence in the military seems to never quite have died. Since in 1945 most women 'went away' traditional constructs of gender roles were only mildly upset. Military culture and the associated values could largely continue to be built around images of military masculinity. Some women remained in service in all four countries. Their numbers were, however, kept very small with explicit ceilings or very specific expectations of recruits' social standing. Britain retained separate women's services unusually long, until the early 1990s.

In the US there was little indication of a will to adapt military culture to the growing need to recruit women when too few suitably qualified men were prepared to fill the ranks of the new All Volunteer Force (AVF) in the 1970s. Reflecting on this state of affairs George Quester observed that traditional male officers were not keen on recruiting women and that

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<sup>71</sup> Gerard de Groot, "I Love the Scent of Cordite in your Hair - Gender Dynamics in Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries during the Second World War", *History* Vol. 82, no. 256 (1997), pp. 73-92.

<sup>72</sup> Kathleen Broome Williams, "Women Ashore: The Contribution of WAVES to US Naval Science and Technology in World War II", *The Northern Mariner/Le Marine du nord* Vol. 8, No.2 (1998), p. 11.

“discussion of women in combat often descends quickly into a series of double-entendre jokes, typically betraying a nostalgia for the good old days when men lived in camps and women were camp followers”.<sup>73</sup>

Senior military leaders responsible for recruitment and “thoughtful officers” were taking seriously the potential, but also “real problem of a more female military service”, but, optimistically he projected that “military services that cannot recruit enough male personnel to fill their rosters may surprise us in how quickly they overcome biases against female recruits”.<sup>74</sup>

Yet, Major General (ret) Jeanne Holm, reflecting on the Cold War period, found that “for the most part *women were forced to adapt* to institutional social values, rules, and modes of life”; the services resisted change although they “eventually succumbed to *some* adjustments in the organisation, particularly in matters of social conduct and policies unique to women” [emphasis added].<sup>75</sup> In practice this has meant that women were forced into accepting and justifying the systemic status quo, when they would have benefitted from advocating change. The latter was not an option, lest it might have been perceived as a breach of such military values as loyalty or lacking the necessary mettle to become a member of the service, as Jana Pershing observed in her study of hazing at the US Naval Academy in the 1990s.<sup>76</sup>

For decades gender equality and equal opportunity policies were afterthoughts to, not principal drivers of, women’s recruitment. Rather than preparing for the pending integration of women in new roles, they were aimed at fixing specific problems after they emerged. There has for decades been considerable self-deception about the

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<sup>73</sup> George H. Quester, “Women in Combat”, *International Security*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1977), p. 85.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Holm, *Women in the Military*, pp.7f

<sup>76</sup> Jana L. Pershing, “Men and Women’s Experiences with Hazing in a Male-Dominated Elite Military Institution”, *Men and Masculinities* 8 (2006): 481ff.

degree to which the services successfully addressed problems of sexual harassment and assault.

In 1995 GAO compiled a report for a member of the House on Equal Opportunities policies in the US armed forces. It summarises the findings of a wide range of reports, mainly internal to the DOD or the services. Amongst them is a summary of the Navy's response to the Tailhook 1991 scandal. Joslyn Ogden called it an "infamous" and "catalytic event whose fallout resulted in the dismissal of several high-ranking officers, the revelation of the Navy's struggle to integrate women into its ranks, and a stain on its reputation",<sup>77</sup> its admission of inadequate investigation of the incidents but also inadequate leadership at the convention.

Just below this section is a summary of *An Update Report on the Progress of the Women in the Navy, by 1990 Navy Women's Study Group, 1990*. The report had made a large number of recommendations to the Navy on less discriminatory treatment of women, their integration and prevention of women's harassment and abuse. The status of the recommendations is summarised as: "The Navy reports that all of the sexual harassment recommendations and most of the other recommendations have been addressed."<sup>78</sup>

## **The Real Dangers of Historical Amnesia**

Minimal adaptation of processes and cultures was one consequence of treating women in the military as a temporary phenomenon. Lorry M. Fenner, then Lt Col in the US Air Force, observed another, whose effects are also still visible today and whose effects reinforce the status of women as Dempsey's "something else". In the

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<sup>77</sup> Joslyn Ogden, "Tailhook '91 and the U.S. Navy", *Case Studies in Ethics*, The Kennan Institute for Ethics, Duke University, undated. <https://web.duke.edu/kenanethics/CaseStudies/Tailhook%26USNavy.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> GAO, Equal Opportunity: DOD Studies on Discrimination in the Military (Letter Report, 04/07/95, GAO/NSIAD-95-103) - Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on National Security, House of Representatives, April 1995, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/230/221030.pdf>

late 1990s she was puzzled by the US public's lack of knowledge about women's service in the US military.<sup>79</sup> Investigating the phenomenon, she found that women's accomplished history in the military was neither acknowledged in scholarly military histories nor in many of the post-WWII public debates or media representations about the role of women in the US armed forces.

She argued that assumed "public anxieties" meant that military restrictions on, and media representations of, women's roles in the military were "constructed in a way that contained [them] within traditional notions of femininity, heterosexuality, and morality".<sup>80</sup> Women's contributions to national defence were thus camouflaged and rendered forgettable. As a result of this invisibility, every round of debates over an expansion of women's roles was doomed to be historically uninformed and untainted by knowledge that past changes were accompanied by challenges to, and a degree of adaptation of, military practice as well as re-negotiations of women's roles in the military and society. It was "historical amnesia" which "confined debates to trivialities and visceral responses".<sup>81</sup>

This is not at all a trivial point. It goes again to the heart of trust in women. These visceral responses, which often became revenants, are yet another way of casting doubt on women's trustworthiness and impact on military effectiveness. Connie Reeves made exactly the same observation about "invisible soldiers" and the fact that women's ability to be effective and contribute to the effectiveness of military operations keeps being forgotten with regard to nurses.<sup>82</sup> Although they take place in wider society such debates interact with intra-military debates. They can thus be

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<sup>79</sup> Lorry M Fenner, "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not: Informing the Debate on Military Service and Citizenship", *Gender Issues* (1998), p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Connie L. Reeves, "Invisible Soldiers – Military Nurses" in Francine D'Amico and Laurie Weinstein (eds.), *Gender Camouflage – Women and the U.S. Military* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp. 15-30.



directly relevant for the perception, status and treatment of women within armed forces.

One such deeply “emotional” argument, as Chief of US Navy personnel Admiral Watkins put it, is over time lost to pregnancy. Watkins pointed this out to his fleet when he disseminated the findings of a 1975 Navy report which refuted the wide spread claim that men accrued less lost time than women did due to pregnancy; “men lost 190,000 days to drug rehabilitation and another 196,000 days to alcohol rehabilitation, almost twice the absentee rate of Navy women including time lost to pregnancy”.<sup>83</sup> And yet, the same arguments were still put forward in 2007, although recent studies have upheld the 1975 findings. They showed that US Navy women lost no more days than men, “who lose more time due to sports injuries and disciplinary reasons”.<sup>84</sup>

Other revenants are discussed by Enloe in the early 1980s; as shown above they are still part of the debate. Enloe observed the British and US militaries’ reluctance to change their conception of women’s service as a temporary phenomenon despite the need for female soldiers. This, she argued, triggered in the military “an exaggerated need to pursue more and more refined measures of sexual difference in order to keep women in their place”, including “official studies of pregnancy, menstruation and ‘upper body strength’ in an almost desperate search for some fundamental, intrinsic (i.e. not open to political debate) difference between male and female soldiers” designed to “justify women’s continued exclusion from the military’s ideological core – combat”.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Linda Bird Francke, *Ground Zero – The Gender Wars in the Military* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), pp. 108f.

<sup>84</sup> Alliance for National Defense, *Issue Paper – Pregnancy and Military Operations*, undated (post-2007) <http://www.4militarywomen.org/Pregnancy.htm>

<sup>85</sup> Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 138.

That these claims were overturned by the senior military or civilian leadership, when the personnel situation demanded it and once in post women proved them wrong, has never prevented their repeated use. Brigadier Nicky Moffat, who retired from the British Army in 2012 as the highest-ranking woman, made this point in the current debate on the Army's review of the ground close combat exclusion, when she stated that "arguments against women in combat roles were the 'same that used to be trotted out to exclude women from the wider range of roles in which they are now allowed to serve'".<sup>86</sup>

The effect of this recycling of arguments, which then have to be refuted with reference to the new context, is not only that it delays official sanction of the entry of women into new roles. It can have a great deal more problematic ramifications for the women who are already serving. The US armed forces have "continually redefined combat and combat support occupations to allow the services to integrate more women"; the military's "repeated violations of its own gender boundaries ... [exposed] the inconsistencies of gender restrictions when it needed women".<sup>87</sup> Placing women into combat roles unofficially can put female service members' lives at severe risk. Fenner observed for the period between 1945 and 1998 the practice of deploying women in roles for which no congressional authorisation existed.<sup>88</sup> She pointed out that since they were officially not allowed to be in these situations, their achievements were not recorded or made public. They were rendered invisible, potentially put in harm's way without adequate training or equipment. This violates a core principle of any service ethos, that is, that superiors have a duty of care for their subordinates.

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<sup>86</sup> Nicky Moffat quoted in BBC, "Army to review female close combat roles", BBC News, 8 May 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27331365>

<sup>87</sup> Fenner, "Either You Need These Women or You Do Not", p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

The practice is not a thing of the past, as demonstrated by the first so-called *Team Lioness* deployed with the USMC for house to house searches during the Iraq War.<sup>89</sup>

They had been recruited from Army combat support specialisations and not been initiated into the USMC's operating procedures and modes of communication. At least once this meant they were left alone in a life threatening combat situation, which they might have been avoided or coped with better had they been adequately prepared; one of the most exposed members of the team suffered from severe PTSD for years afterwards. They were even edited out of a TV documentary on the operation aired by the "History Channel".

Subsequent female engagement teams did receive training, but even in the high pressure situation of the early Iraq War it is difficult to justify the lack of preparation superiors afforded the first team and the USMC unit with whom they deployed. This is unethical leadership. It is only one example of stretching congressional limits for deploying women; the US Army's long standing practice of 'attaching' women to combat units is another. The practice fosters historical amnesia and can have real life negative consequences for serving women and the prospect of women being eligible for other combat roles.

Whilst the immediate peers of female service members who acquit themselves in such roles can acknowledge their achievement, women cannot be recognised by the wider military and the public for professional performance in roles from which they are officially barred. This is particularly problematic, if it means that they cannot lay claim to trust from fellow service members beyond their immediate unit in their ability to live by service values which expect them to put the task first, protect the lives of their fellow service members and, if necessary, risk their own lives. They were

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<sup>89</sup> *Lioness*, Directed by Meg McLagan and Daria Sommers, DVD, see also <http://lionessthefilm.com/>

prevented from establishing an image more akin to that of the (male) warrior. If they had been killed they were unlikely to have been widely remembered as warriors or revered as heroes since they were not supposed to have been where they were in the first place.

In parallel with making it difficult for women to be acknowledged as warriors, even the modest equality and diversity policies have been consistently undermined by the pronouncements and behaviour of leaders. There is ample evidence that toleration of sexism give licence for further sexism and that this can ultimately create a climate in which sexual harassment, assault and rape are deemed acceptable.<sup>90</sup> It is unsurprising that women have not been universally successfully integrated and that they confront sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault in service, if still serving and retired senior military leaders send messages that reinforce exclusionary thinking.

An example is the cover senior leaders provided for years in complete disregard for the professional ethos for the USS Enterprise's XO, Captain Honors, who was punished for making and disseminating sexist 'motivational videos' only long after the event.<sup>91</sup> Women working in a sexist environment are significantly more likely to experience rape, because rape needs to be seen as a stage on a continuum of violence starting with harassment and that "the leadership behaviours of officers are a powerful risk factor for violence towards servicewomen".<sup>92</sup> Even if sexist attitudes are voiced from outside, such as ex-USMC member and former US Navy Under-

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<sup>90</sup> Thomas E. Ford et al., "More than "Just a Joke": The Prejudice-Releasing Function of Sexist Humour", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* Vol. 34, No. 2 (2008), pp. 159-70; Kathryn M. Ryan and Jeanne Kanjorski, "The Enjoyment of Sexist Humour, Rape Attitudes, and Relationship Aggression in College Students", *Sex Roles* Vol. 38, No. 9/10 (1998), pp. 743-746.

<sup>91</sup> Christopher A. Preble, "Why I no Longer Support Cpt. Honors", *CNN*, 5 January 2011 at <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/01/05/preble.honors.videos/index.html>

<sup>92</sup> Anne G. Sadler et al., "Factors Associated with Women's Risk of Rape in the Military Environment", *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 43 (2003): 271.

Secretary James Webb's infamous invectives against women over the decades,<sup>93</sup> likeminded serving more junior ranks may take their cue from them especially if they originate from a retired officer. In a less direct manner these senior leaders thus reinforce the idea of the brotherhood of knights and the implied chivalric code, which provides unofficial legitimacy for discriminatory behaviour against women and other visible minorities.

## Conclusions

In the past year the Australian and US senior military leadership has made important progress in understanding and conceptualising sexual assault and gender integration as being closely related to the exclusion of women from certain combat roles. This analysis has demonstrated just how important that recognition and the revocation of the ground close combat exclusion are for the prospects of truly equal treatment of women in the armed forces.

In current military culture the warrior ideal is the most important measure of the prestige, honourableness and trustworthiness of service members and that ideal is ultimately grounded in the practice of ground close combat. Whilst men in other roles may fall short of the ideal, unlike women they are not part of a collectively excluded group whose worth is measured as deficient not only because they are not men but also because they are not even potentially eligible to becoming warriors.

This is highly problematic in ethical terms, because in practice the warrior ideal is associated with an unofficial chivalric code which is discriminatory in ways that are highly relevant to female service personnel. They are excluded from the circle of initiates to whom the chivalric code applies, firstly because they are not part of the

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<sup>93</sup> James Webb, "Women Can't Fight", *Washingtonian*, 1 November 1979 at <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/jim-webb-women-cant-fight/>

(ground close combat) warrior class and secondly because as women they are denied agency and considered to be in need of protection. Together these two exclusions make women simultaneously dependent on male protection and vulnerable to their predation.

Gender integration policies so far have, however, not enabled women or encouraged all men to change the cultural parameters which have allowed for the perpetuation of the unofficial application of the chivalric code. This is because, despite the long history of women's distinguished service in the military, the armed forces as organisations neither invited nor quite accepted women as permanent members; to some degree the discourse in wider society has also contributed to this historical amnesia. As a consequence women's achievements have been left unrecorded or suppressed, sometimes for constitutional reasons, their capabilities unrecognised.

Notwithstanding many successful careers women have had in service, in the public debate women were thus often doomed to being subjected to sexist prejudices and stereotypes many of which had to be refuted successfully several time over. This has mattered for serving women in several ways. They were potentially put at greater risk of sexual assault, because their peers and superiors were encouraged by the sexist aspects of the public debate. If they were sent into combat operations for which their superiors had no authorisation, their achievements remained unrecognised and they were unable to establish they professional credentials. This then reinforced the underlying cultural predisposition of those who live by the chivalric warrior code to neither trust nor respect female service members.

It is for these reasons that the new understanding amongst the senior military leadership in Australia and the US is of such huge importance. But the analysis has also made it clear what a complex undertaking it is to change military culture so

profoundly that women will be treated in accordance with the military ethos, that is, with integrity, respect and honour.